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RECENT EDUCATIONAL DISCUSSION

ORGANIZATION OF UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES.—Extracts from the annual report of the President of Harvard University:

“The question of the organization of universities and colleges, of the relation between the faculties and the governing boards, has of late years provoked much discussion, and it may not be out of place to consider the problem from the point of view of our own history and traditions. The form of corporate organization with which we are most familiar is the industrial. Concerns of this kind are created by capitalists who take all the risks of the business, conduct it through a board of directors whom they select, and employ the various grades of persons who serve it. The rights and duties of all persons employed are fixed by a contract with the corporation, that is with the owners of the property, and extend only so far as they are contractual. The main reason for the present form of industrial organization is that capital originates the enterprise and takes the risk. For that reason the board of directors is elected by the owners of the capital. Other kinds of industrial organization can be imagined, and have existed. A body of workers may get together, secure the use of capital at a fixed rate of interest, and conduct the business themselves. But whatever other forms of corporate organization might exist, it is natural that we should take our ideas from the one to which we are most accustomed, and apply them to institutions of all kinds. Yet to do so in the case of universities and colleges, where the conditions are very different, creates confusion and does harm. In this case, there are no owners who take the risk of the business. The institutions are not founded for profit, but for the purpose of preserving, transmitting and increasing knowledge. The trustees, or whatever the members of the governing board may be called, although vested with the legal title to the property, are not the representatives of private owners, for there are none. They are custodians, holding the property in trust to promote the objects of the institution.

"In the Middle Ages, when the universities first appeared, their property was held and the enterprise conducted practically by the academic body. This is the condition today of the colleges in Oxford and Cambridge, where the property of a college is vested in, and all its affairs are conducted by, the Fellows. In most places this state of things has not continued. In continental Europe the property has become vested, as a rule, in the State, which has also the ultimate power of control. In the American endowed universities it has become vested in a board, or boards, distinct, for the most part, from the teaching staff.

"The transformation at Harvard is interesting. The College was founded in 1636 by a vote of the General Court appropriating money for that object. In 1642 an act was passed for the government of the College, placing the control in the hands of a Board of Overseers, composed of the Governor, the Deputy Governor, the Magistrates, and the Ministers of the six adjoining towns. This was followed in 1650 by another act creating a corporation, after the pattern of an English college, composed of the President, Treasurer, and five Fellows, but acting under the supervision of the Overseers. In the early days a part of the five Fellows were resident teachers, or, as they were then called, Tutors. They could not all have belonged to that class, because it was three-quarters of a century before there were as many as five teachers beside the President. As a rule the Tutors seem to have been young men who served a short time while awaiting a call to a parish. Perhaps it was for this reason that more mature men from outside were elected to the Corporation. Certain it is that by the time the charter was twenty-five years old, if not before, we find among the Fellows ministers of the neighboring towns.

"Towards the close of the seventeenth century several attempts were made to revise the charter and introduce outside members, but for various reasons they all failed of adoption, and in 1707 the original charter was declared to be in force and has remained so ever since. The number of settled ministers among its members continued, however, to increase until in 1721 there had been for some time only one Fellow in the Corporation who was a teacher at the College. In that year two of the Tutors presented to the Overseers a memorial claiming places in the Corporation, apparently on the ground that they were resident fellows giving

instruction in the College and as such were the Fellows intended by the Charter of 1650. The Overseers sustained their claim; so did the House of Representatives, and the controversy dragged on for several years until it was finally brought to nought by the opposition of the Governor, backed eventually by his Council. The question was interwoven with an acute religious quarrel and a desire to remove the ministers in the Corporation whose ecclesiastical views were unpopular. Although the Corporation was not overborne, and the obnoxious Fellows were not removed, it yielded so far as to elect Tutors to the next vacancies that occurred, so that by 1725 three of them were members of the body.

"There continued to be two or three Tutors or Professors in the Corporation until 1779 when a notable change began. Save during the confused period at the close of the seventeenth century, when new charters were put into operation only to be defeated by refusal of the royal approval, the non-resident Fellows, that is those who were not teachers at the College, were always ministers of the neighboring towns. But the convulsion of the Revolution, the growth of the University and the financial difficulties caused by the war, 'indicated to the Corporation,' in the words of Quincy, 'the wisdom of selecting men of experience in business, and practically acquainted with public affairs.' The first man of the new type was James Bowdoin, elected in 1779; and since that time almost every choice was of this kind, the occasional clergymen elected being chosen not because incumbents of the neighboring parishes but for their personal value as counsellors. The only teachers in the University thereafter elected Fellows were Professor Eliphalet Pearson who served from 1800 to 1806, and Professor Ephraim W. Gurney who served from 1884 to 1886.

"The change, however, did not take place without subsequent protest. In 1824 a memorial signed by eleven members of the instructing staff, claiming that according to the intent of the charter the Fellows ought to be resident, paid teachers, was presented first to the Corporation and then to the Overseers. While it was under consideration, a war of pamphlets was waged between John Lowell in opposition to the memorial and Edward Everett, then a Professor, in support of it. Each of them dealt keenly with as much of the early history of the College as he could find in contemporary records; and the impression left on the

reader today is that the framers of the charter had in mind in a vague way the organization of an English college, but that the word 'Fellow' was at that time used loosely, and that no distinct limitation was intended to be placed upon the selection. On January 25, 1825, the Overseers voted unanimously: (1) 'That it does not appear to this board that the resident instructors of Harvard University have any exclusive right to be chosen members of the Corporation'; (2) 'That it does not appear to this board that the members of the Corporation forfeit their offices by not residing in the College'; and (3) 'That, in the opinion of this board, it is not expedient to express any opinion on the subject of future elections.' The Overseers seem, however, to have thought that the instructing staff should be represented among the Fellows, for they refused to confirm the election to the next vacancy of Judge Jackson, one of their own number, until the Corporation stated its desire and purpose to elect a resident instructor a Fellow as soon as a proper occasion should offer. Within ten years Joseph Story and James Walker were appointed professors while Fellows, and retained their places on the Corporation; so that in a certain way the instructing staff was represented there; but the proper occasion for electing a resident instructor did not come until 1884 and the professor so chosen continued a Fellow for only two years. In short, the question of giving to the instructing staff a representation upon the Corporation was virtually settled in 1825, has never been seriously revived, and there appears to be no desire to revive it today.

"The transition which has taken place at Harvard is an example of the differentiation of functions that comes with the growth in size and complexity of an institution. More recent universities and colleges in America have not gone through this evolution, but have started with a body quite distinct from the instructing staff, and containing none of its members, except the President; yet a body in which the title to the property and the complete ultimate control are legally vested. This legal situation has no doubt led to the present unfortunate tendency to regard the boards of trustees of institutions of learning as analogous to the boards of directors of business corporations, their legal position being the same. In spite, however, of a difference in legal organization, the best and most fruitful conception of a university or college is the ancient one of a society or guild

of scholars associated together for preserving, imparting, increasing, and enjoying knowledge.

"If a university or college is a society or guild of scholars why does it need any separate body of trustees at all? Why more than learned societies which are obviously groups of scholars, and have no such boards recruited outside their own membership? One reason is to be found in the large endowments of our institutions of learning that require for investment a wide knowledge and experience of business affairs. In fact, as already pointed out, the vast complexity of a modern university has compelled specialization of functions, and one aspect thereof is the separation of the scholarly and business organs. Another reason is that higher education has assumed more and more of a public character; its importance has been more fully recognized by the community at large; it must therefore keep in touch with public needs, make the public appreciate its aims, and the means essential to attain them; and for this purpose it must possess the influence and obtain the guidance of men conversant with the currents of the outer world.

"There is a further reason more fundamental if less generally understood. Teaching in all its grades is a public service, and the administration of every public service must comprise both expert and lay elements. Without the former it will be ineffectual; without the latter it will become in time narrow, rigid or out of harmony with its public object. Each has its own distinctive function, and only confusion and friction result if one of them strives to perform the functions of the other. From this flows the cardinal principle, popularly little known but of well-nigh universal application, that experts should not be members of a non-professional body that supervises experts. One often hears that men with a practical knowledge of teaching should be elected to school boards, but unless they are persons of singular discretion they are likely to assume that their judgment on technical matters is better than that of the teachers, with effects that are sometimes disastrous. Laymen should not attempt to direct experts about the method of attaining results, but only indicate the results to be attained. Many years ago the Board of Overseers, after a careful examination, came to the conclusion that the writing of English by Harvard undergraduates was sadly defective. In this they were acting wholly within their proper

province, and the result was a very notable improvement in the teaching of English composition. But if they had attempted to direct how the subject should be taught they would have been hopelessly beyond their province. They would not have known, as the instructing staff did, how it should be done, and they would have exasperated and disheartened the teachers.

"But another question may well be asked. Granted that there should be both expert and non-professional elements in the management of a university or college, why in a society or guild of scholars should the non-professional organ be the final authority? For this there are three reasons. In the first place, so far as the object is public—and where teaching is conducted on a large scale the object cannot fail to concern the public deeply—that object must in the final analysis be determined by public, that is by non-professional, judgment. In an endowed university the governing board does not, indeed, represent the public in the sense that it is elected by popular vote, but it is not on that account any less truly a trustee for the public.

"In the second place, the non-professional board is responsible for the financial administration, and the body that holds the purse must inevitably have the final control.

"Thirdly, the non-professional board is the only body, or the most satisfactory body, to act as arbiter between the different groups of experts. Everyone knows that in an American university or college there is a ceaseless struggle for the means of development between different departments, and someone must decide upon the relative merits of their claims. In a university with good traditions the professors would be more ready to rely on the fairness and wisdom of a well constituted board of trustees than on one composed of some of their own number each affected almost unavoidably by a bias in favor of his particular subject.

"Let it be observed, however, that although the governing board is the ultimate authority it is not in the position of an industrial employer. It is a trustee not to earn dividends for stockholders, but for the purposes of the guild. Its sole object is to help the society of scholars to accomplish the object for which they are brought together. They are the essential part of the society; and making their work effective for the intellectual and moral training of youth and for investigation is the sole reason for the existence of trustees, of buildings, of endowments

and of all the elaborate machinery of a modern university. If this conception be fully borne in mind most of the sources of dissension between professors and governing boards will disappear. At Harvard it has, I believe, been borne in mind as a deep-seated traditional conviction.

"The differences between the ordinary industrial employment and the conduct of a society or guild of scholars in a university are wide. In the industrial system of employment the employee is paid according to the value of his services; he can be discharged when no longer wanted; and his duties are prescribed as minutely as may be desired by the employer. In a university there is permanence of tenure; substantial equality of pay within each academic grade; and although the duties in general are well understood, there is great freedom in the method of performing them. It is not difficult to see why each of these conditions prevails, and is in fact dependent upon the others. Permanence of tenure lies at the base of the difference between a society of scholars in a university and the employees in an industrial concern. In the latter, under prevailing conditions, men are employed in order to promote its earning power. In a university the concern exists to promote the work of the scholars and of the students whom they teach. Therefore in the industrial concern an unprofitable employee is discharged, but in the university the usefulness of the scholar depends largely upon his sense of security, upon the fact that he can work for an object that may be remote and whose value may not be easily demonstrated. In a university, barring positive misconduct, permanence of tenure is essential for members who have passed the probationary period. The equality of pay goes with the permanence of tenure. In an industrial establishment the higher class of officials, those who correspond most nearly to the grade of professors, can be paid what they may be worth to the concern, and discharged if they are not worth their salaries. How valuable they are can be fairly estimated, and their compensation can be varied accordingly. But professors, whose tenure is permanent, cannot be discharged if they do not prove so valuable as they were expected to be. Moreover it is impossible to determine the value of scholars in the same way as that of commercial officials. An attempt to do so would create injustice and endless discontent; and it would offer a temptation to secure high pay, from their own

or another institution, by a display wholly inconsistent with the scholarly attitude of mind. The only satisfactory system is that of paying salaries on something very close to a fixed scale, and letting every professor do as good work as he can. In an industrial concern the prospect of a high salary may be needed to induce the greatest effort; but indolence among professors is seldom found. They may, indeed, prefer a line of work less important than some other; a man may desire to do research who is better fitted for teaching, or he may prefer to teach advanced students when there is a greater need of the strongest men in more elementary instruction; but failure to work hard is rare.

"The governing boards of universities having, then, the ultimate legal control in their hands, and yet not being in the position of industrial employers, it is pertinent to inquire what their relation to the professors should be. If we bear in mind the conception of a society or guild of scholars, that relation usually becomes in practice clear. The scholars, both individually and gathered into faculties, are to provide the expert knowledge; the governing board the financial management, the general coordination, the arbitral determinations, and the preservation of the general direction of public policy. In the words of a former member of the Harvard Corporation, their business is to 'serve tables.' The relation is not one of employer and employed, of superior and inferior, of master and servant, but one of mutual coöperation for the promotion of the scholars' work. Unless the professors have confidence in the singleness of purpose and in the wisdom of the governing boards, and unless these in their turn recognize that they exist to promote the work of the society of scholars, the relations will not have the harmony that they should. The relation is one that involves constant seeking of opinion, and in the main the university must be conducted, not by authority, but by persuasion. There is no natural antagonism of interests between trustees and professors. To suggest it is to suggest failure in their proper relation to one another; to suppose it is to provoke failure; to assume it is to ensure failure.

"The question has often been raised whether nominations for appointments should be made by the faculties or their committees, or by the president. It would seem that the less formal the provisions the better. Any president of a university or college who makes a nomination to the governing board without

consulting formally or informally the leading professors in the subject and without making sure that most of them approve of it, is taking a grave responsibility that can be justified only by a condition that requires surgery. The objection to a formal nomination by a faculty, or a committee thereof, is that it places the members in an uncomfortable position in regard to their younger colleagues, and that it creates a tendency for the promotion of useful rather than excellent men. A wise president will not make nominations without being sure of the support of the instructing staff, but he may properly, and indeed ought, to decline to make nominations unless convinced that the nominee is of the caliber that ought to be appointed.

"Attempts have been made to define, and express in written rules, the relation between the faculties and the governing boards; but the best element in that relation is an intangible, an undefinable, influence. If husband and wife should attempt to define by regulations their respective rights and duties in the household, that marriage could safely be pronounced a failure. The essence of the relation is mutual confidence and mutual regard; and the respective functions of the faculties and the governing boards—those things that each had better undertake, those it had better leave to the other, and those which require mutual concession—are best learned from experience and best embodied in tradition. Tradition has great advantages over regulations. It is a more delicate instrument; it accommodates itself to things that are not susceptible of sharp definition; it is more flexible in its application, making exceptions and allowances which it would be difficult to foresee or prescribe. It is also more stable. Regulations can be amended; tradition cannot, for it is not made, but grows, and can be altered only by a gradual change in general opinion, not by a majority vote. In short, it cannot be amended, but only outgrown."

THE FUNCTIONS OF THE FACULTY IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF A UNIVERSITY.—Extracts from an address at the inauguration of the President of the University of Michigan:

". . . To enter immediately into the heart of the subject, I beg to call attention first to the fact that the functions actually exercised by faculties in good and progressive institutions in the determination of university policies and their execution is much